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Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01
CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09 DODE-00
DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 SOE-02 DOE-15 FMC-01 TRSE-00
H-01 INR-10 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /146 W
----------101356 300725Z /14
R 300300Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7572
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS, PLOS, FJ, XP
SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

1. IN THE COURSE OF A MEETING 26 JUNE WITH JIOJI KOTOBALAVU, SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR SPRFO AND ASKED HIM IF HE HAD A CHANCE TO LOOK OVER THE NEW DRAFT CONVENTION (JIOJI HAD LEFT THE CONFERENCE AFTER THE MORNING SESSION OF 5 JUNE TO ACCOMPANY THE PM TO KOREA AND CHINA). JIOJI DIDNOT RESPOND WITH ANY PARTICULAR ELATION AND AFTER SOME QUESTIONING HE CAME UP WITH THE FOLLOWING REMARKS:

(A) ALTHOUGH THE NOVEMBER DRAFT HAD BEEN IMPROVED BY THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS THE FINAL TEXT WAS STILL ONLY ONE OPTION ON HOW TO PROCEED IN SETTING UP SPRFO AND NOT
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FIJI'S FIRST OPTION AT THAT. IN HIS OPINION THE BASIC ISSUE IS MEMBERSHIP. THE SPRFO AS NOW CONSTITUTED WILL INCLUDE STATES WHOSE 200 MILE EEZ IS NOT AT ALL (US) OR ONLY PARTIALLY (NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA) COVERED BY THE AGENCY. HIS APPARENT PREMISE WAS THAT THE AGENCY SHOULD INCLUDE IN THE FIRST PLACE ONLY STATES WHOSE ENTIRE EEZ COMES WITHIN ITS GEOGRAPHIC JURISDICTION. HIS IDEA IS TO HAVE AN ARTICLE IDENTIFYING THE

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FORMER STATES (FORUM NATIONS LESS NZ AND AUSTRALIA) BY NAME AND PROVIDING FOR EXTENSION OF MEMBERSHIP TO OTHERS BY UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF FOUNDERS. HE CONSIDERS THAT THE FORMULA IN DRAFT CONVENTION FOR LIMITING MEMBERSHIP IS "COLONIAL."

(B) WHEN THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT INSTEAD OF EEZ SOME COUNTRIES LIKE THE U.S. ARE BRINGING UNDER THE AGENCY'S JURISDICTION THEIR ENTIRE FISHING INDUSTRY JIOJI OPENED HIS SLANTED EYES BUT NOT THE MOUTH.

(C) HE WELCOMED THE COMPROMISE AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE FOR DECISIONS BY CONCENSUS BUT WENT ON TO COMMENT THAT THE BIGGEST CONCESSION IN THIS COMPROMISE WAS MADE BY THE PACIFIC ISLANDS PRESUMABLY AGAIN BECAUSE THEY ARE SUBJECTING TO THE AGREEMENT THEIR ENTIRE EEZ.

(D) WHEN REMINDED THAT THE NEW DRAFT WAS AGREED UPON AD REFERENDUM HE SAID THAT THE ISLANDS WILL HAVE TO CONSULT EACH OTHER BEFORE THE FORUM LEADERS MEETING IN NIUE (PROBABLY IN SEPT.) AND THAT FIJI WOULD WISH TO EMPHASIZE THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF SPRFO AND NOT LIMIT IT TO THE ECONOMICS OF HOW TO MAXIMIZE MARINE RESOURCES.

2. AT ONE POINT THE DISCUSSION TURNED TO THE MINI-FORUM MEETING IN APIA ON 2 JUNE WHERE IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO SEEK AN ACCOMMODATION WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE U.S. TO PARTICIPATE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

SPRFO. HE DEMURRED ON THAT AND TRIED TO QUESTION FIRST THE ACCURACY OF THE REPORT AND SECOND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEETING SINCE NOT ALL OF THE FORUM LEADERS HAD PARTICIPATED IN IT. THE AMBASSADOR REMINDED HIM HOW FORCE-FULLY THE SPEC DIRECTOR HAD SUMMARIZED THE RESULTS OF THAT APIA MEETING AND HOW DELIBERATELY HE MENTIONED ONLY NAURU AS HAVING BEEN ABSENT FROM THAT MEETING BECAUSE HE HAD TAKEN THE PRECAUTION TO CONSULT WITH THE PM OF FIJI AHEAD OF TIME. AND IN ANY EVENT, JIOJI WAS REMINDED, HE WAS PRESENT AT THE TIME AND HE COULD VERY WELL SPEAK UP AND CHALLENGE THE SPEC REPORT IF HE DISAGREED. AGAIN HE FOUND NOTHING TO SAY BUT PERSISTED IN SHOWING A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SOLIDARITY WITH PNG.

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3. AT ANOTHER POINT HE MANAGED TO SPEAK OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF THE MOUTH REGARDING PNG INTEREST IN BRINGING THE PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA TO SPRFO. HE CONCLUDED WITH RAMBLING STATEMENTTS OF RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DRAFT CONVENTION PENDING RECEIPT OF A FULL REPORT FROM THE FIJI DELEGATION WHICH HE CLAIMED HE HAD REQUESTED BUT HAD NOT RECEIVED YET.

4. COMMENT: JIOJI'S REACTION TO THE DRAFT AGREEMENT DID NOT COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE. AT THE END OF THE JUNE NEGOTIATIONS SEVERAL DELEGATES REMINDED EACH OTHER THAT ALTHOUGH PNG WAS OUT IN FRONT FIJI SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED AS A POTENTIAL PROBLEM.

5. IN ADDITION TO HIS IDOLOGICAL HANG-UPS JIOJI HAS A PERSON-ALITY PROBLEM WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE PATIENCE OF ALL THOSE WHO MUST DEAL WITH HIM. HE IS SO DRIVEN BY NEED TO PROVE HIMSELF AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR OF GOF FOREIGN
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POLICY THAT HE IS PREPARED TO GO PRETTY FAR TO FIND FAULT WITH THE WORK OF OTHERS DONE IN HIS ABSENCE. HE WENT SO FAR AS TO TELL THE NZ HIGH COMMISSIONER RECENTLY THAT THE FIJI DELEGATION TO THE JUNE NEGOTIATIONS "DID NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR FIJI.". AFTER HE LEFT THE CONFERENCE. THE NEW ZEALANDER LAUGHED HIS FACE WHICH EXPLAINS PERHAPS THE SMALL DEGREE OF SELF RESTRAINT JIOJI SHOWED IN FAILING TO REPEAT THIS PARTICULAR REMARK TO THE AMBASSADOR.

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6. JIOJI'S RESERVATIONS ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION ARE CAUSING SHARP DIVISIONS WITHIN GOF.AGRICULTURE MINISTER (RESPONSIBLE ALSO FOR FISHERIES) TOLD AMBASSADOR 27 JUNE THAT HE IS QUITE HAPPY WITH THE NEW DRAFT BUT BEING AWARE OF THE VIEWS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPT. HE HAS SENT A PAPER TO THE PM RECOMMENDING APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE. HE TRUSTED THE PM'S COMMON SENSE TO LEAD HIM TO A FAVORABLE DECISION SOON.

7. WITHOUT UNDERESTIMATING JIOJI'S ABILITY TO AROUSE RATU MARA'S NATIONALIST PRIDE AND SENSITIVITY WE BELIEVE THAT COMMON SENSE WILL PREVAIL AND GOF WILL APPROVE AND SIGN THE DRAFT CONVENTION. THE ONLY PROBLEM WE SEE IS THAT THE FORUM MEETING IS TOO FAR OFF AND THIS WILL GIVE JIOJI SUFFICIENT TIME TO INITIATE HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH PNG AND OTHER ISLANDS. THE RESULT MAY WELL BE THE CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE OR EVEN CONSPIRACY FOR RENEGOTIATIONS WHICH EVEN THE FORUM LEADERS MAY FIND DIFFICULT TO RESIST.

8. WE WILL AVOID ANY "DEBATING" WITH JIOJI OR OTHERS BUT WE WILL BE ALERT TO POINT OUT THAT THE JUNE CONFERENCE ENDED WITH AN AGREED DRAFT CONVENTION AND WITH A DECISION TO REFER IT TO GOVERNMENTS FOR FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION.
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